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PROFESSOR WILLIAMS AMONG GEOLOGISTS

Professor Williams was one of the small group of geologists who were present at the organization meeting of the Geological Society of America, which has become the largest organization of geologists in the world. It is meant in compliment, that Professor Williams appears to have frequently been present at the birth of scientific societies; for example, the Society of Sigma Xi, the Geological Society of America and the Paleontological Society.

The Geological Society was organized at a meeting called at Cornell University. The meeting was held in Sage College, in the Botanical Hall, on December 27, 1888. It appears probable that this initial gathering of the Society, with representatives from distant places, was held at Ithaca on the suggestion and invitation of Professor Williams. He certainly had immediate charge of the arrangements; and was thanked by name along with the Trustees of the University; and in the evening he and Mrs. Williams received the Fellows of the new society at their residence.

Of the 13 geologists present at the Ithaca meeting three bore the name Williams. These were Henry Shaler Williams, Samuel G. Williams and J. Francis Williams from the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, and three of the 13 were members of the Geological Department of Cornell: H. S. Williams, S. G. Williams and J. F. Kemp.

The other geologists present were: James Hall, from Albany, who was elected President; Charles H. Hitchcock, from Dartmouth College; Henry B. Nason, from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; W J McGee, representing the U. S. Geological Survey, Washington; J. J. Stevenson, from New York University; I. C. White, from the University of West Virginia; Alexander Winchell, from the University of Michigan; Newton H. Winchell, from the University of Minnesota; and H. L. Fairchild, from the University of Rochester. Of this representative group only five are now living: Hitchcock, Kemp, Stevenson, White and the speaker.

At this first meeting Professor Williams was elected Treasurer, and was made one of the committee charged with revision of the tentative Constitution. He held the office of Treasurer until 1891, when he was succeeded by Dr. I. C. White. From 1892 to 1894 he was one of the Councillors of the Society. In 1903 he was the

Second Vice-president; and in 1904 he was the First Vice-president. During all the years down to 1916 Professor Williams was active in the work of the Society. He presented and published many papers; and was recognized as one of the older, more eminent, honored and respected Fellows.

The relation of Professor Williams to the geologic world is also well shown by the number and the character of his published writings. The U. S. Geological Survey list of published writings in geology and paleontology from the beginning of time down to 1916 credits him with 87 titles. It is an illustration of his modesty and deliberation that he did not rush into print hastily. His first paper was not published until 1880, when he was at Cornell, and 12 years after his graduation. From 1880 to 1891 he is credited with 27 titles; and with 28 from then to 1900. The first paper was on the "Genesee slate," in *Science*, volume one. His last paper in the Survey list, for 1916, was on the Silurian of Maine.

Professor Williams did not make the mistake so often made, especially by young men, of writing on a variety of subjects outside of his own special line of study. His writings are quite strictly limited to biologic geology; paleontology and stratigraphy. The exceptions may be noted: in 1887 he published in the *American Naturalist* a paper on "Methods of instruction in general geology." During the years when he was editing the *American Journal of Science*, 1897-1899, his reviews of other men's publications include several (6 are noted) which relate to general geology, or to matters outside his specialty. He also wrote two biographical memoirs, one on Professor Ralph S. Tarr, and one on Professor James D. Dana. The latter writing is judged to be his finest piece of writing along geologic lines. He did it *con amore*, and it shows a grasp of the broad subjects in which Dana toiled as a pioneer, and as the most eminent geologist of his day.

HERMAN L. FAIRCHILD